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ABSTRACT

This self-study guide facilitates evaluation of early childhood special education programs by providing a tool for identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. Steps are outlined for completing a program self-study. Then forms are offered for assessing the quality of specific program areas. A section on necessary relationships examines school district interagency cooperation/coordination and staff-parent interactions. A section on eligibility for services focuses on locating and identifying children with suspected handicapping conditions, screening, and assessment. Forms to evaluate program specifics cover program delivery models, therapy delivery models, staff qualifications, and staffing ratios. To assess the program's physical environment, forms are provided for considering space and equipment, health and safety, and transportation. Forms dealing with staff-child interaction address classroom management and the curriculum's philosophy, organization, strategies, and materials. Evaluation of program administration calls for a review of general procedures, staff development, program evaluation procedures, and staff supervision. Each form lists several elements found in a quality early childhood special education program, along with space for indicating compliance with these elements and for making comments. (JDD)

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September 1, 1987

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In response to an interest on the part of the WASA Special Education component, this document was drafted by a committee of early childhood professionals from throughout the State of Washington, representing many disciplines and points of view. The committee members were:

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OSPI and WASA are grateful for the hours contributed to this effort, and the hours that will be contributed as you engage in the self-study process. Together we are better.

INTRODUCTION

The commitment "to be the best that we can be" is shared by early childhood special education staff and administrators throughout Washington. To move ourselves forward in the provision of high quality early childhood special education programs requires a commitment to reflection and change. This self-study guide is intended to be one avenue for facilitating program evaluation. The purpose is to provide, in a functional format, the collective opinion of the field regarding quality programs. It is intended to be used as a tool for identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. This guide is only a tool to facilitate the interactive process of self-study that is hopefully ongoing.

We invite your comment on this instrument which will be revised as needed. Please review the document, xerox the pages on which you have comment, and send the pages (with comment) to Joan Gaetz, Special Services and Professional Programs, OSPI, Old Capitol Bldg. - FG-11, Olympia, WA 98504. Appropriate changes will be incorporated into the manual and updates and changes will be made available.

Both OSPI and WASA believe in the importance of the provision of high quality services to families and children. We appreciate your willingness to commit the human and program resources required to conduct a self-study. We are sure that the children will benefit.

Allen Hughes	Janet Lynn	Joan Gaetz
WASA Special Education	ESD 114 Regional	SPI Early Childhood
Component Group	Early Childhood	Special Education
President	Coordinator	Coordinator

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HOW TO COMPLETE A PROGRAM SELF-STUDY

The purpose of this manual is to provide districts with a means by which they can study the quality of their programs.

In order to assist you with this process, the following steps are recommended:

1. The Special Education Director (or other appropriate person) meets with all early childhood team members to discuss the self study manual and the processes involved in evaluating program strengths and areas for improvement. After reviewing this manual, the group determines whether they want to study all aspects of the program or to start with just the section that is of highest priority to them.

2. A committee is selected to engage in the actual self-study process. Ideally, this committee should consist of at least the program administrator, an early childhood special education teacher, instructional aide, CDS, OT, PT, psychologist, parent and a respresentative from the community.

3. The administrator contacts the ESD Regional Early Childhood Coordinator to provide technical assistance with the process, if desired.

4. This committee then establishes specific blocks of time to meet. During the meetings, the committee members discuss each item and determine whether the appropriate response for their program is "yes", "no", or "needs improvement". Any relevant comments are also made on the form.

5. The results of these meetings are shared with all other appropriate team members and action plans for improving the program are developed.

6. The district contacts all available resources to assist in meeting the specific action plans (e.g., ESD Regional Early Childhood Coordinators, staff from other districts or agencies).

7. The committee reconvenes periodically to evaluate progress toward meeting specific action plans and to determine if a change in plans is necessary.

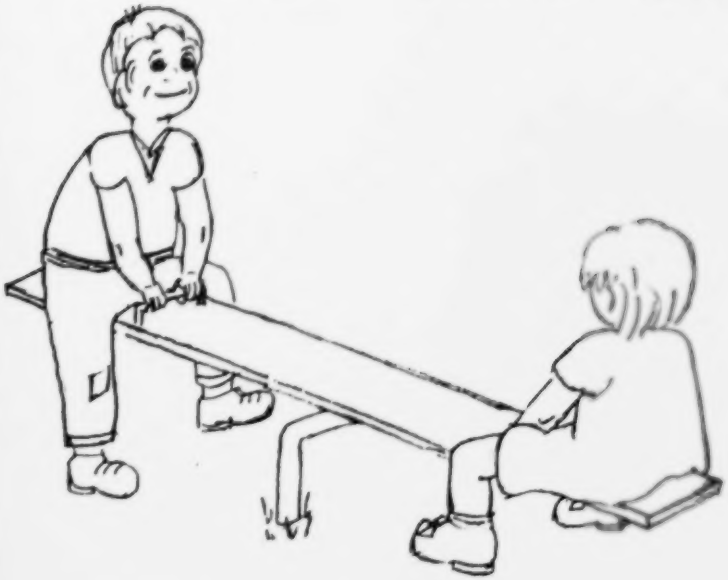
8. The committee sends suggestions for improvement of this tool to the Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor at OSPI; the manual can then be periodically amended to reflect your input.

Also included in this manual is a self-study/needs assessment for the early childhood special education teacher. Specific recommendations for the use of this tool are included with it.

We invite the professional associations representing psychology, CDS, OT, PT, nurses, social workers, administrators and others to develop a self-study tool for inclusion in future editions of this manual.

NECESSARY RELATIONSHIPS

1. Interagency Cooperation and Coordination
2. Staff–Parent Interaction



INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

RATIONALE:

The development of an integrated support system among agencies has become a necessity if young children are to receive the maximum service available in a community. No one agency can provide the complete range of necessary services. While collaboration may present challenges to creative programming, this should not limit the ability of different agencies to work together in providing a continuum of services for young handicapped children. There are myriad ways that the strengths of school districts and other agencies can be integrated to maximize services. There are a variety of creative options available that enable agencies to work together while adhering to the laws and mandates that govern their services.

Working together to bring services to children and their families provides a number of tangible benefits. The most important of these is the increase in the range and choice of services available to meet the individual needs of children. Active and creative involvement among all agencies is necessary if we are to begin to close the gaps in existing programs and provide a maximum of service to children and families.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. The staff has compiled a list of organizations and agencies providing services for developmentally handicapped preschool children and their families.				
2. The staff directs families to organizations and agencies that serve the general preschool population (i.e., day care, community preschool programs).				
3. A process is established for working with other service agencies.				
4. The staff has developed procedures to disseminate information about programs to agencies and to the general public.				
5. The staff explains the importance of sharing information with all agencies involved with the children and seeks written parental consent to do so.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. District has designated a person to coordinate services including shared services, between school district and other service providers.				
2. District has identified a person(s) to coordinate the transition between other service providers and school district programs for children who are developmentally handicapped.				
3. Effective transitions between programs are achieved through mutual agreement of the parents and service providers.				
4. Procedures exist for ensuring that other agencies are used as integral parts of the continuum of services.				
5. School district personnel meet on an ongoing basis with other community agencies for the purpose of planning coordinated services to children and families that are jointly served.				

*Needs improvement

STAFF-PARENT INTERACTION

RATIONALE:

School programs cannot adequately meet the needs of children until they recognize the importance and validity of the child's family. Programs must develop strategies to work effectively with families. Communication between the school and families needs to be based on the concept that the parents or primary care givers are and should be the principle influence in the children's lives. One aspect of a quality program is one in which parents are well informed and are welcomed as observers, contributors, and team members.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

STAFF-PARENT INTERACTION

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. Information about the program is given to new and prospective families, including a written description of the program's philosophy and operating procedures.				
2. Programs with significant numbers of non-English-speaking families provide materials in the parents' primary language or mode of communication.				
3. A process has been developed for orienting children and parents to the school. The process may include a pre-enrollment visit, parent orientation meeting, and/or gradual introduction of the children to the school.				
4. Staff and parents communicate regarding home and school practices such as child discipline, self-help skills, communication techniques and transfer of learned skills. Potential conflicts and confusion for children are minimized through: a. Home visits/home teaching b. Parent volunteering in the classroom c. Parent conference d. Phone calls e. Written communication f. Other				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

PARENT-STAFF INTERACTION (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
5. Parents are involved in developing and implementing placements and programs including: a. Assessment b. Goals and objectives c. Placement d. Support services				
6. Parents are welcome visitors in the preschool at all times.				
7. Conferences are held at least twice a year and at other times, as needed, to discuss children's progress, accomplishments, and difficulties at home and at school.				
8. The staff provides the opportunity for family members to identify their strengths and needs, grow in their understanding of the development of their child, and cope with the unique needs of raising a child with a handicap through: a. Information exchange b. Family participation in home, classroom, and/or play group activities c. Group instruction d. Individual training e. Parent-to-parent training f. Parent support group				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

PARENT-STAFF INTERACTION (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
9. The staff supports and encourages parent-child interactions that are of sufficient quantity, mutually enjoyable, and appropriately stimulating at the child's developmental level.				
10. Parents and staff recognize and capitalize upon the positive contributions of the child who has a disability.				
11. The staff responds appropriately to families' need for support and assists families in accessing other resources by encouraging independent decision-making skills.				
12. The staff models appropriate teaching and management techniques for parents to use in the home environment.				
13. The issue of confidentiality is addressed with parents and staff members to ensure appropriate handling of information and observations.				
14. Families are involved in the planning process for transition into the next appropriate school placement.				

*Needs improvement

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

1. Childfind
2. Screening
3. Assessment

CHILDFIND

RATIONALE:

Local school districts are required to conduct activities to locate and identify students with a suspected handicapping condition, ages 0-21. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

a. Preschool development screening
b. Distribution of developmental charts
c. Media informational campaigns
d. Interagency cooperation and referral
e. Questionnaires for first-time enrolling students
f. Awareness training for staff

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

CHILDFIND

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. The staff has developed an awareness in the community that screening opportunities are available through the school district childfind process.				
2. The staff established lines of communication with public and private agencies, such as private preschools, daycare centers, and public health, medical, and social service agencies regarding childfind.				
3. A process is established to facilitate requests for screening.				
4. Screening opportunities are provided to the community on a consistent, scheduled basis.				
5. Where more than one agency conducts screening, cooperative screening programs are established.				
6. A coordinated referral and follow-up process is defined and developed with public and private agencies.				

*Needs improvement

SCREENING

RATIONALE:

The purpose of screening is to identify a child's developmental profile and make appropriate decisions regarding needs.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

SCREENING

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. Requests for screening are responded to in a timely manner.				
2. Parents participate in the screening process via parent intake interviews. Parents are informed of their child's rights, as well as parental rights, and a consent for release of information is obtained.				
3. The staff appropriately handles information related to the child and family and adheres to confidentiality requirements at all times.				
4. A systematic process for screening has been established to provide information about the child's developmental status across all areas of development, i.e., cognitive, motor, communication, social/emotional, vision, hearing and health.				
5. Reliable screening tools are used which screen all areas of a young child's development.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

SCREENING (Continued)	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
6. Personnel are adequately trained to administer and interpret results from developmental screening instruments.				
7. Screening results are effectively and promptly communicated to parents, legal guardians, and/or primary care givers.				
8. Screening results identify children in need of further assessment.				
9. Referrals are made in a timely systematic manner following screening.				
10. A tracking system is in place to monitor the referral outcome.				
11. Procedures for referral to other agencies are established for students who are not in need of school district intervention or whose needs are not completely met through school intervention.				

*Needs improvement

ASSESSMENT

RATIONALE:

The purpose of the assessment is to gather reliable and accurate information on a child's current developmental performance. This information is used for:

a. Determining eligibility for special education services
b. Designing programs to meet a child's specific needs
c. Making appropriate referrals for additional services

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

ASSESSMENT	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. District has established procedures for initiating a focus of concern.				
2. All existing information is reviewed to avoid unnecessary duplication: a. Screening results b. Medical history/records c. Schools records d. Previous evaluations e. Previous vision and hearing screening f. Records of previous involvement with public or private agencies				
3. Written consent for assessment is obtained from parents.				
4. Parents are informed of their child's rights and their parental rights, and are included in the assessment, planning, and evaluation process.				
5. The staff appropriately handles information on the child and family and adheres to confidentiality requirements.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

ASSESSMENT (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
6. The child's developmental history and other pertinent information is obtained from the parents, legal guardians, and/or primary care givers.				
7. Trained, certificated personnel select and administer appropriate norm-referenced instruments which meet the standards of state special education WAC to qualify the child for special education services.				
8. Assessment information includes criterion-based instruments, behavioral observations, and other instruments appropriate to assessing the child's development.				
9. Instruments and procedures are appropriately considered with regard to socio-economic, cultural, environmental, or physical factors so as not to bias the assessment of a child's ability, e.g., providing an interpreter for deaf, hard of hearing, or non-English speaking children or using motor free tools to assess physically handicapped children for intellectual cognitive ability, etc.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

ASSESSMENT (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
10. The testing takes place on more than one occasion and at different times of the day to maximize the opportunity to assess the child's potential and best efforts.				
11. The assessment is conducted in more than one environment, one of which is using the child's own home, using the child's personal toys and involving people familiar to the child.				
12. All areas of the child's development are assessed along with an assessment of the needs of the family.				
13. Assessment information includes the child's specific strengths.				
14. Team members, including parents, legal guardians, and/or primary care givers, interpret and discuss assessment results.				
15. Assessment data are accurately and appropriately used to ascertain WAC eligibility category and support to the district's decision.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

ASSESSMENT (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
16. Assessment data are accurately translated into goals and objectives for the Individual Education Plan (IEP).				
17. Assessment procedures are periodically evaluated to determine how accurately young handicapped children are identified.				
18. Procedures for referral to other school district or community resources are established for students ineligible for special education services.				

*Needs Improvement

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

1. Program Delivery Models
2. Therapy Delivery Models
3. Staff Qualifications
4. Staffing Ratio

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

Program Delivery Models

RATIONALE:

Special Education WAC requires that a continuum of alternative placement options be made available to meet the needs of handicapped students and that each student's placement be determined on an annual basis.

Effective early intervention programs must make individual placement decisions based on the most appropriate educational opportunity within the least restrictive environment for each child. A variety of placement options should be available to the preschool handicapped child. **Removal or noninclusion of a handicapped child in a regular educational environment should occur only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.**

Special education must make the program fit the child, rather than making the child fit the program. "Best practices" clearly emphasize the importance of flexibility and creativity in program options. Each program should make continuum of preschool services available which afford the young child with handicaps the greatest opportunity for growth and success.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

PROGRAM DELIVERY MODELS

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. Each child's service model is determined individually.				
2. The following factors are considered when services are planned: a. Child's age b. Child's identified needs c. Child's identified strengths d. Family goals e. Family expectations f. Program and community resources				
3. Contractual and interagency agreements are available to expand the districts continuum of service options.				
4. The following options are available from which to develop an individual service delivery system (listed least to most restrictive): a. Support services within a regular preschool b. Regular preschool with home-based support c. Integrated preschool d. Integrated preschool with support e. Integrated preschool with home-based component				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

PROGRAM DELIVERY MODELS (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
f. Self-contained classroom with mainstreaming				
g. Self-contained classroom with home-based support delivered by certificated staff				
h. Home-based system with opportunities for peer relationships				
i. Combination of any of the above.				
5. Provision is made for students to move during the school year from one delivery model to another based on assessment of needs and progress toward goals.				
6. Procedures and criteria are established for exit from program at any time during the program year including:				
a. Reassessment				
b. Referral to other agencies when indicated				
7. Staff are continually aware of the special education needs of students and are prepared to reassess and exit students from program as appropriate.				

*Needs improvement

THERAPY DELIVERY MODELS

RATIONALE:

The preschool child's needs and modes of learning are greatly varied and it is important that related services support each child's ability to benefit from his/her educational program. The delivery models of support services need to be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and their families.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

THERAPY DELIVERY MODELS

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. The district has a rationale for each child's particular mode of service delivery.				
2. Various service options are available and are discussed with parents/care givers during conferences.				
3. Service options include:				
a. Pull-out models, including consultation with the teachers				
b. Therapy in classroom during regular classroom activities, including consultation with the teacher				
c. Parent training and consultation				
d. Home-based therapies				
e. Therapy only; no classroom program				
f. Any combination of the above				

*Needs Improvement

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

RATIONALE:

The quality of the staff is the most important determinant of the quality of an early childhood program. Research has found that staff training in child development and/or early childhood education is related to positive outcomes for children. These outcomes include increased social interaction with adults, development of pro-social behaviors, and improved language and cognitive development. The age of preschool students and the multiplicity of their needs requires the employment of qualified, experienced, certificated personnel and trained, skilled classified support personnel. The use of team involvement rather than independent judgment helps ensure a more complete and accurate assessment, placement, and program for each child.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. All children in the program are served by appropriately licensed/certificated personnel who have training and/or experience in early childhood education.				
2. Classified staff have training and/or experience working with young children and families.				
3. The staff is able to plan for the different needs of the population.				
4. The staff is competent to serve on multidisciplinary teams, develop IEPs, and consult with nonschool personnel, parents/care givers, and other educators.				

*Needs improvement

STAFFING RATIO

RATIONALE:

Well-organized staffing is an important variable in the quality of a program. Research strongly suggests that the higher the ratio of staff to children, the more positive are the outcomes for children. These outcomes include less aggression and more cooperation among children. A program must be sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of and promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

STAFF RATIO

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. The number of children in a group is limited to facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive activity among children.				
2. Maximum group size is determined by the distribution of ages and handicapping conditions within the group and any of the following which apply: a. Access to support services (OT, PT, CHS) b. Severity of handicapping conditions c. Access to community and interagency resources d. Size of physical space				
3. Teachers have adequate time for parent contact and planning time.				
4. Taking maximum group size criteria into account, the total number of children assigned to one teacher does not usually exceed the following guidelines:				

*Needs Improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

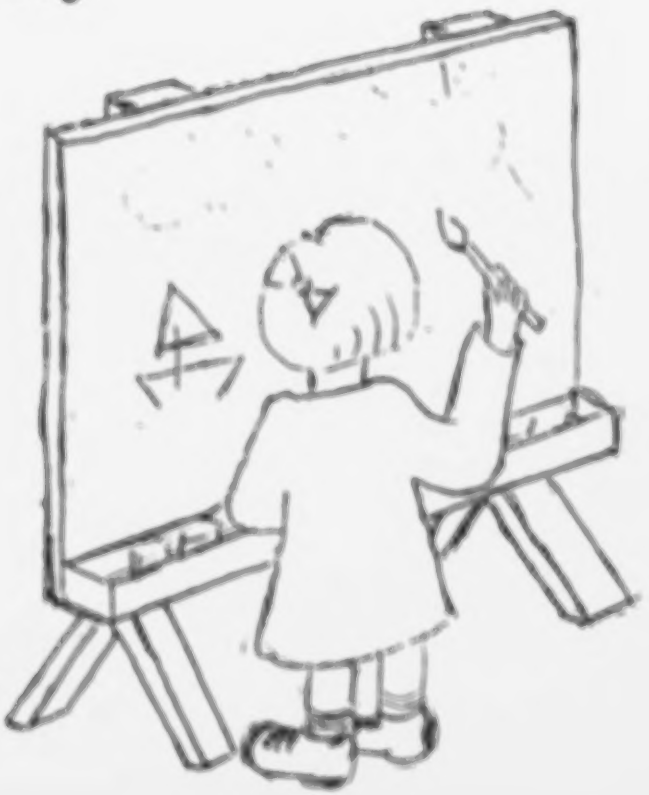
STAFFING RATIO

	Minimum	Maximum	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
Mildly handicapped:						
= one session per day	5	10				
= two sessions per day	4	15				
= adult student ratio	1:4					
Moderate/severe population:						
= any arrangement	4	6				
= adult student ratio	1:3					
3. Sufficient staff are available to meet the children's needs in the areas of learning and the needs of the family.						
6. Full-time, permanent aides are assigned to individual classes.						
7. Aides are not assigned other tasks within the building when needed to maintain a safe, effective adult student ratio in the classroom.						

*Needs improvement

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Space and Equipment
2. Health and Safety
3. Transportation



SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

RATIONALE:

The physical environment affects the behavior and development of children and adults. The quality of the physical space, equipment and materials provided affects the level of involvement of the children and the quality of the interaction between adults and children. A quality program must constantly evaluate the amount, arrangement, and use of its available space and how these foster optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
Space and Equipment				
1. Indoor and outdoor environments are safe, clean, attractive, and spacious:				
a. Cushioning materials are used under climbers				
b. Large equipment is securely anchored, and all equipment is appropriate and maintained in good repair				
2. Furnishings are arranged to accommodate the physical needs of the children.				
3. Space is arranged to facilitate a variety of small group and/or individual activities.				
4. Equipment and activity centers are arranged to:				
a. Encourage interaction among children				
b. Allow for easy supervision				
c. Facilitate appropriate behaviors				
d. Hold the interest of young children				
5. Areas are appropriate for type of activity planned.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
6. Materials are accessible, orderly, and in good repair.				
7. Space and fixtures are planned for young children:				
a. Tables and chairs are at appropriate height				
b. Bulletin boards, chalkboards, and children's art are at child's eye level				
c. Stable shelves are at children's level				
d. Floor coverings are appropriate for activity planned				
e. Individual spaces are provided for clothing and belongings				
f. Acoustical and color treatments are appropriate				

*Needs improvement

HEALTH AND SAFETY

RATIONALE:

In any educational situation it is necessary to provide for a safe and healthy environment. No amount of curriculum planning or positive adult-child interaction can compensate for a hazardous environment. A quality early childhood program should prevent illness and accidents, be prepared to deal with emergencies, and educate children concerning safe and healthy practices.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

HEALTH AND SAFETY	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
Health				
1. Facilities are in compliance with state fire, health, and safety laws and district regulations.				
2. Adults are free of physical and psychological conditions which could adversely affect children's health.				
3. A written health record is maintained for each child including: a. Complete health exam b. Record of immunizations c. Pertinent health history d. Emergency contact number				
4. The program has a written attendance policy which includes: a. Parent notification guidelines b. Supervision of sick children c. Protection of healthy children				
5. Staff are familiar with the child abuse reporting laws and district policies.				
6. Suspected child abuse and/or neglect is reported to appropriate authorities.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

_____

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health (Continued)

	Yes	No	N/A*	Comments
7. Parents are given a copy of the program's discipline policies.				
8. Spare labeled clothing is kept on hand for each child.				
9. All equipment which comes in contact with the children is appropriately cleaned, including: a. Toys b. Furnishings c. Feeding bibs d. Eating utensils				
10. Hand washing, toileting, and water fountain facilities are accessible to the classroom and have child-sized fixtures.				
11. Diaper changing areas have easy access to running water and are properly sanitized after each use.				

*Needs improvement

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

HEALTH AND SAFETY (Continued)

	Yes	No	N/A*	Comments
13. Medication is stored and administered in accordance with state regulations.				
14. Food is properly stored and refrigerated.				
15. Snacks are planned to promote good nutritional habits.				

*Need improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

HEALTH AND SAFETY (Continued)

	Yes	No	N/I*	Comments
Safety				
1. Adequately trained staff are available at all times to deal with emergencies.				
2. Adequate first aid supplies are readily available.				
3. Staff are alert to the health and medical problems of each child.				
4. Facility has clearly marked emergency exits.				
5. Exits are accessible to nonambulatory and young children.				
6. Facility is barrier-free.				

* Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

HEALTH AND SAFETY

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
Safety (Continued)				
7. Standard safety precautions have been taken, such as:				
a. Electrical outlets are covered.				
b. Cleaning products and other potentially hazardous materials are kept in locked cabinets				
c. Medications are appropriately stored				
d. Materials that could be ingested, such as small beads, small pieces of toys, are kept from children too young to use them.				
8. Procedures in case of fire are planned and practiced on a regular basis by students and staff.				
9. Emergency phone numbers are clearly posted by the phone.				

*Needs improvement

TRANSPORTATION

RATIONALE:

The school district is responsible for providing transportation for preschool children who are eligible for special education and related services. The age and physical stamina of preschool children require careful planning of transportation so bus rides are as short as possible. Special considerations may often apply to the transportation of preschool-age children.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

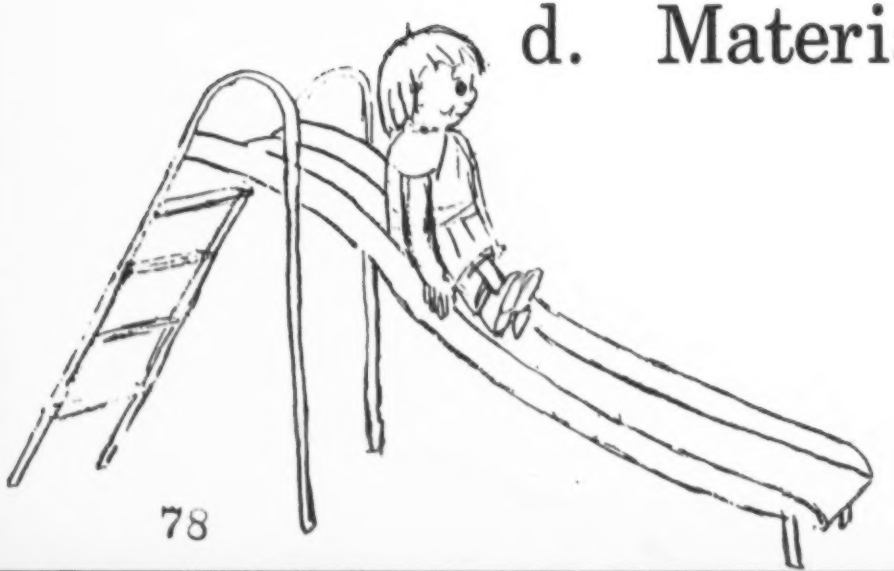
TRANSPORTATION

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. Provisions are made for the safe arrival and departure of all children.				
2. Children are released only to authorized people.				
3. Transportation vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices as required by law.				
4. Parents are not required to transport children.				
5. Transportation options are exercised in the following sequence: a. A scheduled school bus b. Contracted transportation c. Reimbursement of parents d. Other arrangements				

*Needs improvement

STAFF/CHILD INTERACTION

1. Classroom Management
2. Curriculum
   a. Philosophy
   b. Organization
   c. Strategies
   d. Material



CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

RATIONALE:

For children to develop an understanding of self and others, interactions with staff must provide opportunities for positive, supportive, individualized relationships with adults. Young children develop socially and intellectually through peer interaction in a supportive environment. All areas of children's development are integrated and grow in an atmosphere of warmth, personal respect, individuality, positive support, and responsiveness. Recognition of and respect for a child's uniqueness is essential. Interactions should foster understanding and consideration of each child's handicapping condition.

Since multiculturalism is the American norm, all interactions should also respect an understanding of and respect for each child's ethnic heritage.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

STAFF/CHILD INTERACTION

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Classroom Management				
1. The sound of the environment is primarily marked by pleasant conversation, spontaneous laughter, and exclamations of excitement rather than harsh prohibitive noise or authorized quiet.				
2. Staff members interact frequently with children and express respect and appropriately demonstrated affection toward the children by smiling, touching, holding, and speaking with them throughout the day at the children's eye level.				
3. Staff members facilitate the development of self-control by expressing respect, encouragement and caution to children.				
4. The staff is available and responsive to children and listens to them with attention and respect.				
5. The staff stimulates communication from children using developmentally appropriate techniques.				
6. The staff assists children in being comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities.				
7.				

Whole Environment

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

Child/Child Observed

Yes	No	N/A	Comments

Classroom Management (Continued)

5. The staff recognizes that young children learn from total and direct and their native abilities as learning opportunities.

6. The staff fosters cooperative and other pro-social behaviors among children.

7. The staff's expectations of children's social behavior are developmentally appropriate.

8. The staff uses positive techniques of guidance such as:
   a. Redirection
   b. Prevention of potential problems
   c. Positive reinforcement
   d. Encouragement

9. Consistent, clear expectations are explained to children and understood by adults.

10. The staff encourages developmental appropriate: are independence and responsibility for self and others.

Needs improvement

N/A

N/A

[illegible]

RATIONALE:

The curriculum for any program involves the whole of a child's experiences within the program. The stated program philosophy must be consistently reflected in each session's components, i.e., schedules, materials, transitions, activities, and daily living skills.

The criteria for selection of all curriculum components reflect knowledge of children's need for concrete experiences with and active manipulation of their environment.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

	Yes	No	N/A*	Comments
1. Philosophy				
1.1 Program philosophy is stated.				
1.2 Program philosophy is based on a professionally recognized theory in early childhood education.				
1.3 Program philosophy is reflected in:				
a. Curriculum content				
b. Assessment tools used to develop program goals and objectives				
c. Individual IEP goals and objectives				
d. Strategies				
e. Materials				
f. Schedules				
g. Room organization				
1.4 Early childhood program staff cooperatively plan and carry out goals and objectives in agreement with program philosophy.				
1.5 Staff are adequately trained in the procedures and practices of the curriculum.				

*Needs Improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

CURRICULUM

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
2. Organization				
2.1 A daily schedule is planned to provide a balance of activities.				
2.2 Daily lesson plans are evident.				
2.3 Long-term and short-term goals are reflected in daily lesson plans.				
2.4 Data is taken on a regular basis to measure both individual and program progress.				
2.5 The daily routine is fairly consistent from day to day; children know what to expect.				
2.6 The classroom routine reflects a well-planned schedule with a smooth and unregimented transition from one activity to another.				
2.7 Transitions are planned as a vehicle for learning.				
2.8 The program has carefully planned and developmentally sequenced curricula.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

CURRICULUM	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
2. Organizations (Continued)				
2.9 Curriculum plans are flexible enough to provide for the changes and unforeseen circumstances that inevitably arise in children's programs.				
2.10 The group is physically arranged so that:				
a. Physical assistance can be provided when necessary.				
b. Children can interact with adults and with one another.				
c. Communication is facilitated for children who use sign language, communication boards, etc.				
d. Potentially disruptive children are positioned for management.				
e. Data collection materials are easily accessible without being obtrusive.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

CURRICULUM	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
2. Organizations (Continued)				
2.11 Children are not always required to move as a group from one activity to another.				
2.12 Routine tasks are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children's learning of self-help and social skills.				
2.13 The staff organizes small group activities for children sharing common tasks, and works toward stated objectives.				
2.14 Written guidelines are available to facilitate transitions into the next level of instruction.				
2.15 Parents are involved in development of curriculum and in program planning.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

CURRICULUM	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
3. Strategies				
3.1 The staff teaches targeted skills within the functional, daily activities that are of interest to the participating children.				
3.2 The staff provides a variety of developmentally appropriate activities designed to achieve individual and program goals and objectives.				
3.3 Activities and materials selected emphasize experiential learning relevant to life experiences.				
3.4 The staff uses resources to help plan the curriculum, such as current developmental guides and manuals for children with specific handicapping conditions.				
3.5 The staff cooperatively plans and carries out programming with other professionals to meet the goals and objectives of the children's IEPs.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

CURRICULUM	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
3. Strategies (Continued)				
3.6 The staff recognizes "play" as an appropriate learning medium for young children with disabilities.				
3.7 Familiar manipulatives such as sand, water, clay, unit blocks, counters, and other concrete materials are accessible to the children.				
3.8 Daily activities foster motor development.				
3.9 Many forms of art expression are encouraged through the use of a wide assortment of media integrated within the daily curriculum.				
3.10 Experimentation, enjoyment, and appreciation of music and art are encouraged on a daily basis.				
3.11 Strategies are used to educate preschoolers in the least restrictive environment.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

CURRICULUM	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
3. Strategies (Continued)				
3.12 Activity or group-based instruction is supplemented with individual training when: a. Children are not making satisfactory progress after systematically modifying the antecedents and consequences. b. Children are severely handicapped and clearly need more structure and practice to meet the training objectives.				
3.13 Children participate in activities in ways that permit them to gain new skills or practice acquired responses.				
3.14 Whenever possible, children are actively engaged in their surroundings throughout the daily routine.				
3.15 The staff employs appropriate teaching strategies based on behavioral learning principles in an ecologically relevant manner (i.e., shaping, modeling, verbal prompting, visual prompting, manual guidance, etc.)				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

CURRICULUM

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
3. Strategies (Continued)				
3.16 The duration of activities is appropriate to the attention span of the children.				
3.17 Continued opportunities are provided for the reinforcement and generalization of skills across settings with varied materials and different people.				
3.18 Activities are planned to promote a positive self-image and attitude towards peers with awareness of the environmental demands of the child's future placement.				
3.19 Personal safety is included in the curriculum.				
3.20 The staff facilitates social communicative learning by encouraging children to interact with one another.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

CURRICULUM	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
4. Materials				
4.1 Developmentally appropriate materials are used and equipment which project heterogeneous racial, sexual, and age attributes.				
4.2 The staff are permitted to order materials on a planned, orderly basis.				
4.3 Commercial and "teacher-made" materials are developmentally appropriate for the intended population and are safe and durable.				
4.4 Materials and equipment support curricular activities in gross and fine motor, cognition, social-emotional, communication, self-care, play, and multi-cultural awareness.				
4.5 A sufficient number of the children's toys and materials are flexible, that is, they permit a variety of activities.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

CURRICULUM

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
4. Materials (Continued)				
4.6 Materials used such as balls, boxes, blocks, are used to promote testing and exploratory behavior in young children.				
4.7 Specialized materials are provided for individual children to enable them to execute tasks they could not otherwise perform (e.g., built-up spoon handle allows physically handicapped child to feed himself).				
4.8 Equipment and materials are organized to attract the interest of young children and promote accessibility and student independence.				
4.9 Equipment and materials promote active, rather than passive, experience.				
4.10 The housekeeping area includes an ample supply of kitchen equipment for manipulating, sorting, filing, emptying, as well as materials for dramatic play. Both boys and girls regularly use the area.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

CURRICULUM

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
4. Materials (Continued)				
4.11 An ample supply of the following kinds of motor equipment is available: a. Things to climb and balance on b. Things to swing on c. Things to slide on d. Things to jump on and over e. Things to push, pull, and ride on f. Things to kick, throw, and aim for g. Things to build with				
4.12 Art supplies include an ample supply of paper of different sizes, textures, and colors; materials for mixing and painting; and materials for holding things together and taking them apart.				
4.13 Manipulative materials include an ample supply of materials to: a. Sort and order b. Fit together and take apart c. Decode d. Pretend with				
4.14 Construction supplies include tools, wood, cardboard, styrofoam, etc.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

CURRICULUM	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
4.15 Music materials include instruments, a simple record player and/or tape cassette and records and/or tapes.				
4.16 An appropriate sand/water vessel is available with materials for pretending, scooping and digging, filling and emptying.				
4.17 A material lending library is available to parents.				

*Needs improvement

ADMINISTRATION

1. Procedures
2. Staff Development
3. Program Evaluation
4. Staff Supervision

ADMINISTRATION

RATIONALE:

The efficiency and effectiveness with which a program is administered affects all relationships within the program. Administration must create an environment that affords fiscal stability, effectiveness, interpersonal and interdepartmental communication, attention to the needs of all staff, quality care for children, and positive district and community relations.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

ADMINISTRATION

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
1. Procedures				
1.1 Provisions are made for frequent, systematic staff/administration communication.				
1.2 Time and procedures are established for joint planning and consultation among direct service staff.				
1.3 Staff meetings are held on a scheduled basis for staff to consult on program planning, to plan for individual children, and to discuss program conditions.				
1.4 Staff are provided adequate and equitable planning time.				
2. Staff Supervision				
2.1 The staff is supervised and evaluated by appropriate administrative personnel.				
2.2 Input is solicited from certificated staff in the evaluation of assigned, classified staff.				

*Need improvement

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

RATIONALE:

Since early intervention is an expanding and developing field, there is a need for staff to be continually trained and updated. The amount and kind of pre-service and in-service training will vary depending on the needs of the program and previous training. Even programs with highly qualified staff must provide opportunities for staff to obtain current knowledge and new ideas.

To maintain staff morale and enthusiasm for a demanding job, there must be adequte supportive feedback from supervisory personnel.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

ADMINISTRATION (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
3. Staff Development				
3.1 Staff members are provided space and time away from children during the day.				
3.2 Staff are provided opportunities for professional growth.				
3.3 Collegial relationships are encouraged by providing for participation in professional activities.				
3.4 Opportunities are provided for administration, school board, and nonprogram staff to increase their awareness of early childhood education.				
3.5 A plan for staff training is generated jointly from staff evaluation activities conducted by the program administrator and from a needs assessment completed by staff.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

ADMINISTRATION (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
3. Staff Development (Continued)				
3.6 New staff are adequately oriented to:				
a. District goals and philosophy				
b. Emergency health and safety procedures				
c. Special needs of individual children				
d. Guidance and classroom management techniques				
e. Planned daily activities				
3.7 The district provides regular training opportunities for staff to improve skills in working with children and families.				
3.8 Staff training addresses the following areas:				
a. Health and safety				
b. Child growth and development				
c. Program planning				
d. Guidance and discipline				
e. Interagency cooperation				
f. Communication skills with families				
g. Detection of child abuse				
h. Characteristics of, and special provisions for, specific populations of handicapped students.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

ADMINISTRATION (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
4. Program Evaluation				
4.1 Administration and staff conduct an annual assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program.				
4.2 Joint planning for specific program goals is conducted annually.				
4.3 The staff are directly involved in all decisions affecting this section of the program.				
4.4 Parents have input in the evaluation of the program.				
4.5 Short-term gains of children are measured to determine the effectiveness of the program.				
4.6 After leaving the program, children are systematically followed to determine how they are progressing and what percentage of the children are served by regular education, regular education with support, or special education.				

*Needs improvement

Program: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

_____

_____

ADMINISTRATION (Continued)

	Yes	No	NI*	Comments
4. Program Evaluation				
4.7 Longitudinal study is conducted to determine the percentage of students who graduate.				
4.8 Longitudinal study is conducted to determine the percentage of students who become self-sufficient adults.				
4.9 Results of evaluation are used to improve program.				

*Needs improvement

SELF STUDY FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

In addition to studying aspects of the early childhood program, it is also important for each teacher to identify his or her own strengths and weaknesses. To assist with this self study process, the following tool is provided. The intention of the tool is for the early childhood educator to complete the needs assessment on his/her own and, if desired, to share the information with people who can assist in obtaining technical assistance or in sharing their expertise with others. The skills are divided into ten areas:

Screening
Assessment
Curricular strategies
Instructional activities
Instructional materials
Family Involvement
Paraprofessionals and volunteers
Interagency cooperation
Administrative aspects
Self improvement

The tools list four possible reactions:

Help! - help needed as soon as possible. Assistance will be confidential, individualized, basic and to the point. It may involve the sending of materials, a consultant or facilitating a visit to another program.

Need More - no emergency, but perhaps a regional or statewide workshop could be planned for all who have a similar situation.

OK - no technical assistance needed.

Competent - a potential resource to aid other teachers/programs.

After reading the skill, check the box which best reflects your "level" of need. After you have marked all the items, review the needs assessment and circle the item you would like to receive technical assistance on first. Then, if desired, send of copy of the needs assessment to your ESD Regional Early Childhood Coordinator. This needs assessment is only a tool to assist in providing you with the most appropriate resources.

Your signature on the back page will ensure an individual response from your Regional Early Childhood Coordinator regarding that area which you have identified as needing assistance first. If you choose not to sign, please include your district and/or county so regional workshops may be organized based on your needs.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Should any of the objectives not be applicable to your present teaching situation, mark N. A. **SCREENING** The teacher will be able to:	HELP!	NEED MORE	OKAY	COMPETENT
1. Understand the referral process as it relates to identifying young children with potential exceptional educational needs.				
2. Identify all agencies in the community who screen young children for potential problems.				
3. Exchange program and referral information with other community agencies.				
4. Justify the need for a school screening program.				
5. Cooperatively develop a school screening program.				
6. Select and administer valid screening instruments.				
7. Work with a team to develop a system for recording and reporting screening results.				
8. Communicate screening results to parents.				
9. Evaluate and review mechanics of screening program with school personnel.				
Other needs or concerns related to screening:				
ASSESSMENT The teacher will be able to:				
1. Describe the responsibilities of various professionals in the multidisciplinary team process regarding assessment.				
2. Define formal and informal assessment and its purpose.				
3. Compare criterion-referenced tests with norm-referenced tests.				
4. Effectively gather pertinent information on child's background and performance from care givers.				
5. Select and administer a formal assessment tool.				
6. Develop and utilize tools to assess children's performance through observation.				
7. Interpret and relate assessment findings to developmental milestones.				

	HELP!	NEED MORE	OKAY	COMPETENT
8. Incorporate all assessment data into a final multidisciplinary team report, if appropriate.				
9. Relate the importance of your assessment procedures to instruction.				
10. Determine the significance of your assessment procedures as it pertains to program evaluation.				
Other needs or concerns related to assessment: _____				
CURRICULAR STRATEGIES The teacher will be able to:				
1. State the philosophy and long range goals of the early childhood special education program.				
2. Describe the basic principles of the following curricular strategies: behavioral, cognitive, developmental, and discovery.				
3. Justify the curricular strategy you utilize.				
4. Effectively use resources to help plan your curriculum.				
5. Structure the physical setting to meet the needs of young children.				
6. Design and implement appropriate schedules.				
7. Cooperatively plan and carry out programs with staff members, parents and other related professionals.				
8. Describe the range of children potentially eligible for inclusion in an early childhood special education program.				
9. Apply curricular strategies to meet the needs of young children individually.				
10. Apply curricular strategies to meet the needs of young children in groups.				
11. Describe strategies to educate early childhood special education children in the least restrictive environment.				
12. Develop and use a system for evaluating the effectiveness of your curriculum.				

	HELP!	NEED MORE	OKAY	COMPETENT
13. Effectively use the expertise of the multidisciplinary team regarding handicapping conditions and in program planning.				
14. Implement an effective communication system to share information and concerns with staff.				
Other needs or concerns related to curricular strategies: _____				
INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES The teacher will be able to:				
1. Perform a task analysis of a long term goal.				
2. Describe the steps leading to the development of an I.E.P.				
3. Write a complete I.E.P. for a child.				
4. Produce instructional activities as reflected in the I.E.P.				
5. Select activities from curricula, manuals, and activity books which best meet the needs of your class, including children with specific handicapping conditions.				
6. Describe the various elements that affect an individual's learning style.				
7. Effectively organize group activities for children sharing a commonality in the task.				
8. Provide opportunities for the reinforcement and generalization of skills.				
9. Use ongoing assessment to improve instructional activities.				
10. Evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional activities as reflected in the I.E.P.				
11. Provide appropriate supervision and management.				
Other needs or concerns related to instructional activities: _____				

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS The teacher will be able to:	HELP!	NEED MORE	OKAY	COMPETENT
1. Select appropriate commercially produced materials for an early childhood special education classroom.				
2. Produce "teacher-made" materials to facilitate the achievement of instructional objectives.				
3. Effectively use materials which foster independence in learning (learning packets, stations, etc).				
4. Effectively use instructional materials which facilitate the achievement of instructional objectives in groups.				
5. Train primary care givers and classroom personnel to use instructional materials effectively.				
6. Modify instructional materials to make them accessible to children with various handicapping conditions.				
7. Evaluate the appropriateness of materials used in early childhood special education classrooms.				
Other needs or concerns related to instructional materials: _____				
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT The teacher will be able to:				
1. Understand the many ways a child's handicap affects the whole family.				
2. Develop your own rationale for involving families in the program.				
3. Define the staff's responsibilities and the program's resources in implementing a parent involvement component.				
4. Initiate and maintain effective communications with the child's family.				
5. Identify factors in the home that have a positive effect on the child's academic performance.				

WHERE ARE YOU?

	Help!	Need More	Okay	Competent
6. Cooperatively develop long-term goals with the child's parents.				
7. Train parents in the process of parenting as it applies to their children's education.				
8. Promote positive parent-child interactions.				
9. Develop creative strategies to encourage participation from all family members.				
10. Evaluate the effectiveness of involving families in the program.				
Other needs or concerns related to family involvement. _____				
PARAPROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERS The teacher will be able to:				
1. Justify the need for additional assistance.				
2. Help recruit, interview and select applicants for the position of paid assistant.				
3. Recruit, interview and place volunteers appropriately according to needs and abilities.				
4. Orient new assistants to the program.				
5. Relinquish instructional responsibilities to assistants in a gradual and orderly manner.				
6. Provide appropriate training for assistants.				
7. Facilitate positive interpersonal communication among staff.				
8. Manage staff time efficiently throughout the daily program.				
9. Implement an effective communication system to relay instruction to and receive information from assistants.				
10. Assess the performance of assistants.				
Other needs or concerns related to paraprofessionals and volunteers: _____				

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION The teacher will be able to:	HELP!	NEED MORE	OKAY	COMPETENT
1. Develop an awareness of public and private agencies providing educational services to young children and their families.				
2. Develop an awareness of organizations and parents' groups concerned with the welfare of developmentally handicapped children and their families.				
3. Develop a channel to disseminate information on your program to the general public.				
4. Provide relevant information to the child's family.				
5. Assist other school personnel and related professionals in understanding the goals and function of your program.				
6. Understand the laws concerning child abuse and the services that are provided to help young children and their families with abuse problems.				
7. Understand legislation concerning confidentiality of information and record keeping for the developmentally handicapped child and family.				
8. Understand the meaning of advocacy as it relates to the developmentally handicapped child and his or her family.				
9. Identify gaps and overlaps in services to children and their families.				
10. Help coordinate and cooperate with agencies to improve the services to the child and his or her family.				
Other needs or concerns related to inter-agency cooperation: _____				
ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS The teacher will be able to:				
1. Demonstrate knowledge of state and federal laws governing various administrative aspects.				
2. Demonstrate knowledge of funding sources for early childhood special education services.				
3. Describe roles and functions of the local school administration as it pertains to the early childhood special education program.				

	HELP!	NEED MORE	OKAY	COMPETENT
4. Maintain appropriate internal records relating to the administration of the early childhood special education program.				
5. Use effective communication strategies with the school's administrative structure.				
Other needs or concerns related to administrative aspects: _____				
SELF-IMPROVEMENT The teacher will be able to:				
1. Understand the basic needs of human beings.				
2. Identify factors which you need to consider for personal self-growth.				
3. Examine your personal attitudes towards teaching.				
4. Describe qualities of an effective early childhood special education teacher.				
5. Analyze teacher behavior and predict pupil behaviors generated by it.				
6. Create a positive atmosphere that promotes learning.				
7. Describe stages of teacher development.				
8. Evaluate your performance in the classroom.				
9. Secure resources to aid you in improving.				
Other needs or concerns related to self-improvement: _____				
COUNTY_____ NAME_____				
DISTRICT_____ PHONE_____				

Note: This Needs Assessment was developed by the Wisconsin State Department of Education.

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